

Content Analysis: Museum Calendars

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Content Analysis of Museum Calendars

Teachers and parents often plan trips that will stimulate creativity and foster imagination while providing children with a wealth of knowledge. Museums provide a wealth of culture, history and provide the public with “authentic, aesthetic, inspirational, and learning experiences; and interactive, recreational and contemplative opportunities” (Yamada & Fu, 2012). In the fast-paced world, it is important to “streamline the process so that you can see everything...with as little stress as possible” (World of Illusions, 2019).

The goal of analyzing the content of museum calendars was to gain insight on how an event and exhibits calendar through the museum website impacts visitation. The results presented here, focus primarily on the coding of four variables on several museums across the United States: the relevance of images found on the calendar, mobile view accessibility, availability of information, and time [saved].

Event calendars serve to communicate museum events and exhibition information. The content communicated, serving as a form of story-telling that is the result of creative work (Ratzek, 2011). Distribution of a calendar via the website, provides visitors with branding and awareness, providing the venue with a marketing boost, while optimizing visitor flow.

Understanding the impact of having an accessible calendar with up-to-date content, creates awareness around events and exhibits held by the museum and increases visibility. Thus, allowing both the venue and visitors to strategize how to approach current and upcoming events. Maintaining an events calendar and the statistics of visitors on the site, in addition to how many data of how many users “click” the link to purchase tickets, will help the museum determine if there is a need to change tactics in promoting events or exhibits (Ghata-Aura, 2018).

Method

Sample

The content analysis sample was composed of 21 museum calendars, via museum events and exhibit websites. The sample covers a random selection of museums across the United States from Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) in California to the Brooklyn Museum in New York, for August 2021. Physical calendars and bulletins were excluded from the analysis.

Procedure

The events and exhibits calendars were rated by the authors. Raters were trained in the operationalization of variables and in the coding procedures. A total of 20 variables were coded. These variables were grouped into 5 subsections, Formatting, Programming Details, Accessibility, Impact, and Visibility. The variables coded for content analysis in this report consisted of the relevance of images found on the calendar, mobile view accessibility, availability of information, time, and ability to find more information by linking to an event page.

The first variable coded for, Relevance Associated images, was defined as whether the museum calendar provided images related to the events and exhibits on the website. The second variable coded for, Mobile View Accessibility, refers to the accessibility and navigation of the events calendar via a mobile device. The third variable coded for, Informs, refers to the whether the calendar provides visitors with current events and exhibitions. Examples of this include, but were not limited to, the website staying up to date, providing accurate descriptions and information of the event or exhibit.

The fourth variable coded, Time, refers to whether accessing the calendar helped the visitor save time. Examples of this include time saved by accessing the calendar to schedule and set up a visit, and purchasing tickets or reserving a time slot to visit the museum.

Results

Manifest Variables

“To give customers a pleasurable service experience and consequently generate a good rating...managers must design and build an attractive service environment to attract customers” (Wang et al., 2018). Attracting customers begins with the first click of a mouse when they are searching the internet for a destination, as it streamlines the process of choosing which events are suitable for their families.

The authors in general reported museum calendars provided relevant associated images that corresponded with events and exhibits ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 1.18$). A one-sample t test indicated that this mean value was not significantly different from the midpoint (neutral) value of 4.0, $t(99) = 4.46$, $p = .000$, indicating no significant difference in relevant associated images corresponding to events or exhibits.

Latent Variables

Information provided to visitors via website calendar, was deemed a latent variable as a part of the Impact subsection. Meaning, authors coding this section may have interpreted the content in a subjective manner. The definition of the variable informs was whether the calendar provides up-to-date information, the authors may interpret this as all encompassing information to only the necessary information.

While Time analyzes how visitors are able to save time planning a trip to the museum while visiting the events website.

Of the 21-museum events calendar analyzed, 15 were accessed via mobile device. With a mean of 3.53, mobile accessibility view was acceptable for most events and exhibits calendar accessed using a mobile device.

Analysis revealed that for the authors coding 21 museum calendars, there was a significant positive correlation between events calendar page providing necessary information and helping the visitor save time ($r = .49, p = .029$). As museum calendars provide more relevant information on events and exhibits, visitors perceived save time that would assist in planning for their trip increases.

Discussion

It is necessary to streamline the process of planning visits to enrich the minds of our youth, from amusement parks to culture enhancing visits to museums. In order to do so, museums must ensure that their events calendars are visible online through multiple devices, including personal computers and mobile devices. Enhancing visual features such as providing images that pertain to the events and exhibits on display at the museum, builds the environment from the first click of a mouse when searching for a suitable venue.

Due to the need to streamline the planning process, it is necessary for museums to incorporate descriptive information into the events calendar. As seen through the results, when visitors view an event and exhibits calendar website that provides a generous amount of information, visitors perceive that time is saved in planning a trip to the museum. Information

that is necessary to streamline this process include but are not limited to: an accurate description of the event that includes suitable age range, location of exhibit within the museum, time and date of the event or exhibit (if it is not always on display), the ease of which one is able to access the calendar, and ability to purchase or access the link to purchase tickets to specified event or museum.

Should the content analysis for museum calendars be repeated in the future, the coding dictionary should be reevaluated to focus primarily on how accessibly, and information provided for specific events or exhibits would save time for visitors planning a trip to the museum. Analysis of content should be widespread, by analyzing reviews for specific museums. Analyzing a smaller pool of museums, for a longer period of time, would provide researchers with accurate information and understanding of implication from the perspective of the visitors.

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Appendix A

Coding Dictionary

Formatting (Manifest)				
Coding Unit	Definition	Key Words	Example	How Coded
Museum	Is the location a museum?	Museum, center, institute, art, science	Detroit Art Institute is a museum	Yes/No
Archive	Is there an archive of past events/calendars?	Archive, previous, July, 2020	Yes: Calendar Archive/ July 2021	Yes/No
Associated Images	Does the calendar provide images of the events/exhibits?	Image, photo, picture	Yes: Associated image No: No associated image	Yes/No
Associated Images Relevance	Are the images relevant to the event/exhibit	Image, photo, picture	Always: All events match the image shared	5-point Likert Scale: 1 – Never

			(storytime has pictures of children listening to a story, nature walk shows an outdoor trail)	2 – Rarely 3 – Sometimes 4 – Very Often 5 - Always
Monthly	Is the calendar in	Calendar,	Sometimes: Some events match the image shared and some do not Never: None of the events match the image (storytime has a picture of tables and nature walk shows a classroom)	Yes/No

Calendar Format	a monthly format?	month, monthly	formatted in a traditional style opposed to just a list of events.	
Description Format	Is each event formatted the same	Titles, date, headings,	Always: Each event is formatted the same Never: There is no format, each event is different	5-point Likert Scale: 1 – Never 2 – Rarely 3 – Sometimes 4 – Very Often 5 - Always
Pages	Are all events seen on one page?	Next, previous	Yes, all events are on one page	Yes/No

Programming Details (Manifest)				
Coding Unit	Definition	Key Words	Example	How Coded
Dates	Does the calendar provide visitors with the date and time of each event?	Date, time, up-to-date, today, week, daily, update	Date & Time given	5-point Likert Scale: 1 – Never 2 – Seldom 3 – About Half the Time 4 – Usually 5 - Always
Description	Does the calendar provide a description for each event? If so, how long is it?	Details, more info, expand	This event is for children ages 0-3 and parents to participate in a group story followed by a short children's yoga centred on the stories theme.	Number of words
Target Audience	Does the calendar give	Kids, children, teens, adults,	This event is for families	5-point Likert Scale:

	information about the target audience of each event?	elderly, veterans, students		1 – Never 2 – Seldom 3 – About Half the Time 4 – Usually 5 - Alway
Location	Does the calendar provide location information for each event?	Location, area, online, virtual, in person, onsite	In room C at the red campus of the museum.	5-point Likert Scale: 1 – Never 2 – Seldom 3 – About Half the Time 4 – Usually 5 - Alway

Accessibility (Manifest/Latent)				
Coding Unit	Definition	Key Words	Example	How Coded
How many clicks to calendar	The number of clicks it takes to get from the website homepage to	Menu, Content, Events, Programs, Calendar	1 click	Number of clicks

	events page/calendar			
Image Descriptions	Text descriptions for images	Image Description Picture of...	The above image is of a young child sitting on the floor while an adult male reads a picture book.	5-point Likert Scale: 1 - no image descriptions 2 - few images have descriptions 3 - some images have descriptions 4 - most images have descriptions 5 - all images have descriptions
Use of Color	What types of colors does the calendar/events page use? Text only. Colors in pictures do not count.	-	Events page uses 2 contrasting colors and black text	5-point Likert Scale: 1 - one color 2 - two colors 3 - three colors 4 - four colors 5 - five or more colors

Language Accessibility	How many languages are available?	English Spanish Translate	Translate to Spanish	5-point Likert Scale: 1 – one language 2 – two languages 3 – three languages 4 – four languages 5 – five or more languages
Visual Accessibility	Are there features to adjust the page for visual accessibility?	Adjust text size Pause Animations Font Options Readability View Image Descriptions	Very Good: An events page or calendar with font options, image descriptions and a readability view	5-point Likert Scale: 1 – Very poor 2 – Poor 3 – Acceptable 4 – Good 5 – Very Good
Audio Accessibility	Are there features to adjust	Screen Read Audio Play	Very Good: An events page or	5-point Likert Scale:

	the page for audio accessibility?	Videos Captions for videos	calendar with screen readability	1 – Very poor 2 – Poor 3 – Acceptable 4 – Good 5 – Very Good
Exportable	Does the calendar/events page exportable to a PDF or other formatted document?	Print PDF Export	Print this page.	Yes/No
Functionality	Can the page be navigated through cursor and keyboard?	-	Cursor only Cursor and Keyboard	Cursor only Cursor and Keyboard
Ease of Use	How easy was the calendar/events page to navigate?	-	Very Good: The calendar was easy to navigate and explore Very Poor: The calendar was difficult and	5-point Likert Scale: 1 – Very poor 2 – Poor 3 – Acceptable 4 – Good 5 – Very Good

			confusing to use	
Visual Sensory	How stimulating is the calendar/events pages for visual sensory?	Color use Font use Formatting	Very poor: calendar may be poorly formatted with many fonts and colors and flashing images. Very good: calendar may have few colors and a readability option.	5-point Likert Scale: 1 – Very poor 2 – Poor 3 – Acceptable 4 – Good 5 – Very Good
Mobile View Accessibility	Is the calendar/events page easy to view on a mobile device	Menu, site navigation, links, formatting	Very poor: overlapping text/images or awkward formatting. Very Good: easy to read and navigate	5-point Likert Scale: 1 – Very poor 2 – Poor 3 – Acceptable 4 – Good 5 – Very Good
Computer View	Is the	Menu, site	Very poor:	5-point Likert

Accessibility	calendar/events page easy to view on a computer?	navigation, links, formatting	overlapping text/images or awkward formatting. Very Good: easy to read and navigate	Scale: 1 – Very poor 2 – Poor 3 – Acceptable 4 – Good 5 – Very Good
Problems	Are there issues with the calendar/page that impact accessibility?	Broken links Ambiguous Links Awkward formatting Overlapping text	A Great Deal: A calendar with broken links and obstructive formatting Never: A calendar with working links and no formatting issues	5-point Likert Scale: 1 – Never 2 – Little 3 – Somewhat 4 – Much 5 – A Great Deal
Overall Accessibility	Considering all factors of accessibility what would the	Formats Color use Readability Ease of use	Very poor: calendar might have dead links, many colors, no	5-point Likert Scale: 1 – Very poor 2 – Poor

	overall rating based on accessibility		other formats, and overlapping text.	3 – Acceptable 4 – Good 5 – Very Good
			Very good: calendar might have few colors, easy navigation, and multiple formats, and languages.	

Impact (Latent)				
Coding Unit	Definition	Key Words	Example	How Coded

Informs	Does the calendar provide visitors with current events/exhibits?	Informed, awareness, up-to-date, familiar, uninformed, unaware, out-of-date	Very Good: Able to find the information for the Virtual Studios Series on the calendar Very Poor: The calendar was not up-to-date and contained no events for August 2021	5-point Likert Scale: 1 – Very poor 2 – Poor 3 – Acceptable 4 – Good 5 – Very Good
Images	Does the calendar provide an image of what to expect at the event/exhibit?	Eye-catching, striking, visual, discernible, bland, dull, boring	Very Good: Can quickly locate the Virtual Studio Series by the image Very Poor: The calendar was bland, events would be discernible if there had been photos, instead of a vague title	5-point Likert Scale: 1 – Very poor 2 – Poor 3 – Acceptable 4 – Good 5 – Very Good

Time	Did accessing the calendar help the visitor save time?	Time, plan, schedule, set up, arrange, avoid, delay, wasted effort	<p>Saved Time: The calendar provides detailed information that would help the visitor plan for their trip.</p> <p>Waste of Time: The calendar does not share much about events and would not aid in helping a visitor plan a trip.</p>	5-point Likert Scale: 1 - waste of time 3 - some time was spared 5 - saved time
Sharing	Do the events/exhibits offer a “share” button for visitors to share with friends/family?	Sharing, social media, send, email, share button, online	<p>Very visible: Can quickly locate how to share event.</p> <p>Unavailable: There is no way to share the link through the webpage itself.</p>	5-point Likert Scale: 1 – Unavailable 2 – Difficult to Find 3 – other

				platforms availed but not for events 4 – Visible 5 – Very visible
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Visibility (Latent)				
Coding Unit	Definition	Key Words	Examples	How Coded
Other Platforms	How visible are the events on other platforms?	Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube	Visible: This program will be live-streamed on YouTube and you will receive the event link when you register. We recommend using a laptop or desktop computer to enjoy this program. You can submit questions for the speaker in advance or during the program using the Google Form below	5-point Likert Scale: 1 – Unavailable 2 – Difficult to Find 3 – other platforms availed but not for events 4 – visible

				5 – very visible
Contact Information	Is there contact information available?	Need help, contact us	Need help? Contact us! 9 am – 5 pm, 7 days a week (310) 123 – 4567 VisitorServices@location.edu	5-point Likert Scale: 1 – Unavailable 2 – Difficult to Find 3 – other platforms availed but not for events 4 – visible 5 – very visible
Linking	Does the events/calendar page link to more information?	More information, see details, events	See our calendar here Find out more information on the exhibits page.	5-point Likert Scale: 1 – Never 2 – Seldom 3 – About Half the Time

	Do other pages link to the events/calendar page?			4 – Usually 5 - Alway
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